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New York

President:	Mr. Llorentty Solíz	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/922)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/922)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and Mr. Nébié are joining this meeting via video-teleconference from Bangui, and Mr. Vervaeke is joining the meeting via teleconference from Brussels.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/922, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic, 15 June-15 October 2018.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Mr. Nébié and Mr. Vervaeke, as well as by Ambassador Kacou Houadja Léon Adom, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga (*spoke in French*): I am very pleased to brief the Security Council this morning, together with my friends Moussa Nébié and, from Brussels, Koen Vervaeke. I am also happy to see Ambassador Adom.

I am very honoured to be able to address the Council today to provide an update on the situation in the Central African Republic since the publication of the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2018/922). I am confident that, despite persistent challenges, we have laid the necessary foundations for building lasting peace in the Central African Republic. Such an objective is indeed achievable, provided that, in the quest for lasting peace, the region and the international community as a whole remain committed to our collective support for the Government and the people of the Central African Republic. To achieve this result, however, the Central Africans themselves will have to take the lead and set an example.

Since the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in 2014, we have made significant progress in our efforts to put out the flames of the devastating intercommunity conflict that was engulfing the Central African Republic. Our mandate included protecting civilians, supporting the transition process and preserving the territorial integrity of country. The Mission faced a great challenge in carrying out these tasks. When I took office in August 2015, the security situation was such that simple acts of crime could turn violent and destabilize entire cities or even the entire country. The threat of a coup d'état and State collapse or the fear of seeing the country fall back into the way it was in the early days of the terrible civil war of 2013 haunted everyone.

After a little more than three years of work together, I would like to thank each member of the Council for the support offered, particularly during the difficult times that we have been through together. I am immensely grateful for Council members' empathy and encouragement, including during the happy moments we have also shared, such as when the country returned to constitutional order. I also thank the Council for the additional troops it authorized at the request of the Secretary-General. These troops strengthen our capacity on the ground and bolster the determination of our civilian and uniformed personnel. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the troops for their work in the service of peacekeeping, and we pay a solemn and heartfelt tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives.

Clearly, our work is not yet done. The country still faces many challenges. The drivers of the conflict remain, and attacks on civilians persist, leading to massive population displacements. Half of the country continues to need humanitarian assistance, and the provision of such assistance is becoming increasingly difficult, due in part to violent attacks against peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. The State is not in a position to overcome these challenges on its own.

Nevertheless, although the crisis persists, there is reason for hope. Thanks to the hard work of the United Nations and the international community in support of the Government of the Central African Republic, the overall security situation has been brought under control, democratic elections have been held, and the country has returned to constitutional order. State authority is being restored in Bangui and beyond. The Mission prevents atrocities on a daily basis and continues to preserve the territorial integrity of the State. Security has considerably improved in several prefectures, thanks, in particular, to support stemming from local peace agreements. The prefects and sub-prefects have been redeployed throughout the country, as have civil servants from the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture and Livestock, Water, and Public Health. The national security and defence forces have also been deployed, and the justice and reconciliation processes are beginning to take shape.

I am pleased to inform the Council that yesterday, 22 October, the inaugural session of the Special Criminal Court was held. That is an important step in the country's commitment against impunity.

In the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, half a dozen armed groups have committed to participate in the national programme and the Government will begin the disarmament of some of these groups in the west of the country before the end of the year. Most importantly, a peace process has been seriously initiated under the auspices of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which is the sole basis for peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic. My friend and brother, the Special Representative of the President of the African Union Commission, Moussa Nébié, and Chair of the panel of facilitators, will speak of that shortly.

Beyond the work of MINUSCA, the country has made progress in implementing the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, with the support of the Mission and partners. I am pleased to announce that the rate of fundamental distribution has increased since the beginning of the year and that nearly half of the $2.2 billion pledged by donors has been disbursed. MINUSCA, the United Nations country team, the European Union, the World Bank, France and other partners are collaborating with the Government in the planning and implementation of projects under the Plan, which will strengthen peace, security and reconciliation, basic services, infrastructure and economic development. Other key bilateral partners, such as China and the United States, are also making necessary investments in the aforementioned areas.

(*spoke in English*)

This progress that we have made together makes me hopeful that we have laid the foundations needed to build sustainable peace. Like the foundations of a house, they yield no dividends on their own, but a house without foundations will certainly collapse. Together with the Central Africans, we must now help move the country from a phase of containment to one of transformation, in which the dividends of peace can be felt by all communities and all citizens.

The recommendations of the independent comprehensive review led by Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, endorsed by the Secretary-General and recently presented to the troop- and police-contributing countries by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, identify some critical next steps for the Mission. In the context of mandate renewal, helping the African Initiative to succeed must indeed be the Mission's main focus. I am pleased to inform the Council that, as a follow-up to the conclusions of the high-level ministerial meeting on the Central African Republic, held in New York on 27 September, I have been participating in the African Initiative panel of facilitators as a full member. In this new capacity, I have held a series of strategic meetings and consultations within the panel and with the Government in preparation for the launch of the dialogue between the Government and the armed groups. The Mission is henceforth strengthening its substantive and mediation support to the Initiative.

The path towards peace and reconciliation will not be an easy one, as demonstrated by the many peace processes that have come before in the Central

African Republic, and faltered. We in the international community must work with the Government of the Central African Republic to ensure that this peace process is people-centred and does not fail. We must be patient, we must be realistic and we must put in place the critical conditions that will give the African Initiative the greatest chance to succeed.

First, we must ensure that the parties enter into negotiations in good faith and with a true commitment to the dialogue and its outcomes. This means that parties must be willing to make some challenging compromises, which will require vision and leadership on the part of all. It will also require an inclusive follow-up mechanism to ensure that parties adhere to and fully implement the agreement reached.

Secondly, the peace agreement must have the buy-in of the Central African people. Although the agreed dialogue framework does not allow for the direct participation of civil society actors, it will be critical to find innovative ways to ensure that the voices of the people are heard, especially those of women and youth. Their engagement in the follow-up mechanism will also be essential moving forward.

Thirdly, we must put in place security conditions conducive to the dialogue and the enforcement of its outcomes. Our engagement must be backed by credible, effective and sustained pressure, including military, when and where needed. I therefore ask for the support of the Council in ensuring that deployed troops are properly trained and equipped to meet this task and the challenging operational environment we are facing daily.

Finally, if the peace process is to succeed, it will require the unified political support of the members of the Council, the countries of the region and the international community at large. We must have a shared vision and ensure that our engagements with the Central African Republic are both well coordinated and coherent.

The success of the peace process, though necessary, will not be sufficient on its own. If the outcomes are to be sustainable and if transformation is to take hold, MINUSCA should also support the Central African Republic in a number of critical areas.

First, we must strengthen the rule of law and eliminate ungoverned spaces in the country. This includes helping the Government in the long term to regain control of mining sites from armed groups, as failure to resolve this issue will jeopardize the outcomes of any peace agreement. That also includes helping the State to rebuild and strengthen its key institutions, particularly its national security apparatus, so that it can better protect the country, its people and democratic institutions. Working closely with partners, the Mission must expand its support to the re-operationalization of national defence and security forces, in close coordination with the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, the European Union delegation in the Central African Republic, and other bilateral partners, such as France, Russia and the United States. These forces have a multiplier effect on the communities in which they are deployed. Partners have already provided exemplary support to the security sector reform process, and this has yielded remarkable progress. However, short- and mid-term needs are significant, and we must sustain and even expand this support to enable the country to meet its ambitious yet vital security priorities. I seek the Council's support to ensure that MINUSCA will have the appropriate mandate and resources to take on this task and succeed, as requested by the Secretary-General in his letter to the Council in May (S/2018/463).

Secondly, we must work hand in hand with the Central Africans to promote a culture of democracy, in which power is taken through the ballot box and not the bullet. The upcoming elections represent an important opportunity in this regard and for building a culture of inclusion. I again request the Council's support in mandating the Mission to aid the Government through the election period, and request its advocacy among Member States to ensure that we have the resources to take on this task and succeed.

Thirdly, we must continue to support the Government in the fight against impunity and the restoration of the rule of law through the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court and support for judicial actors and in the regions. We must also advance the national reconciliation programme, including by ensuring that the rights of victims are respected, in particular the rights of those hundreds of thousands of Central Africans who have been displaced by the conflict. To that end, we must help authorities develop an integrated transitional justice strategy that responds to the needs and expectations of communities that have deeply suffered as a result of the conflict.

Finally, the Mission must redouble its efforts to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the 2.9 million people currently in need of assistance and protection, more than half of whom are children. Achieving that objective and improving the overall implementation of the mandate will greatly depend on the Council's decision to enhance the force's mobility and flexibility so as to allow us to overcome the prevailing operational and logistical challenges.

The people of the Central African Republic are aware that the road ahead will be difficult. Nonetheless, the steps we have collectively taken so far to help stabilize the country give hope for the future. While the current situation remains unpredictable and precarious, I believe that the progress that has been achieved in various areas and the foundations that have been laid are essential ingredients that can help bring about sustainable peace in the Central African Republic. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that the remaining challenges are addressed fully and in a timely manner. We must do everything possible to ensure that the peace process succeeds. We owe it to the people of the Central African Republic, who have suffered far too long.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Oranga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nébié.

Mr. Nébié (*spoke in French*): It is always an honour for me to address the members of the Security Council, whom I thank for the invitation to update them on the situation in the Central African Republic, as well as for their ongoing interest in the country. It will be difficult to describe everything that is going on and that we are doing in the Central African Republic in five minutes, but I will strive to do so while doing justice to the issue. Without further delay, allow me to make the following points.

Since my previous briefing, on 21 June (see S/PV.8291), it should be noted that there have been significant developments pertaining to the African Union Initiative, designed to lead to the signing of a peace and reconciliation agreement between the armed groups and the Government. In accordance with its agenda, the panel of facilitators has continued its activities at an accelerated pace.

The progress that has been made on convening the dialogue includes, first, the designation of the members of the Government delegation by the President of the Central African Republic, which demonstrates his determination and commitment to the African Initiative; second, the preparation of 14 armed groups for the dialogue by holding workshops on modules for negotiations and the peaceful resolution of crises; third, dialogue preparations for the Government delegation through similar modules; fourth, preparations for civil-society actors, including women leaders and young people, to monitor the implementation of the agreement that will emerge from the dialogue; fifth, a visit by two former Heads of State of the Central African Republic, Mr. Michel Djotodia and Mr. François Bozizé, who have taken on board the message from the Chair of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, expressed their commitment without reservation to the African Initiative road map and told the panel that they would spare no effort in helping to stabilize and restore peace in their country; sixth, a working trip by the panel to the subregion in July, during which it visited N'Djamena to meet with President Deby Itno to ask for his political support for the Initiative, to which the President responded by assuring the panel of his total willingness in that regard and urged Central Africans to use the dialogue as a path to settling the crisis and achieving peace and national reconciliation within the framework of the African Initiative; seventh, the panel's holding from 28 to 30 August of a workshop on harmonizing the claims of armed groups; eighth, the panel's formal submission on 31 August to President Faustin Archange Touadera of a consolidated claims document; ninth, the Government's prompt response by way of a document entitled "Draft political agreement for peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic"; and, tenth, the next and final step, the convening of the dialogue.

We should welcome that progress as a sign that new prospects are opening up for peace and reconciliation. The parties concerned now know what the dialogue will focus on, and that is important. In that regard, I would note the joint efforts led by the international community in Bangui, including the members of the G5+ — the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the European Union, France and the United States — which continue to demonstrate their shared determination to work for peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

I can inform the Council that the consultations and exchanges with stakeholders are forward-looking

and that the dialogue could be convened in the next few weeks. However, I should remind members that in my previous briefing here I emphasized the panel's financial difficulties. I repeat that message today, and I want to stress that failure is not an option. The one and only option is the success of the dialogue and the restoration of peace for the people of the Central African Republic. To achieve this significant aspect of the Security Council's task of maintaining and restoring international peace and security, it now falls to the Council to take specific, robust measures and action in support of the stakeholders of the international community on the ground, to foster and speed up the restoration of peace for the people of the Central African Republic, who have been imploring the Council to do everything possible to ensure peace and freedom of movement in their country.

As I said the last time I spoke to the Council, if its members consent to this effort and give the panel concrete support, I will be very happy to announce at the Council's next meeting on the subject that the dialogue has indeed been held, a consensus agreement reached, a monitoring mechanism put in place, that peace is no longer an empty word and that the implementation of the activities under the agreement is under way.

I should not conclude my statement without mentioning our cooperation with my brother Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and all his colleagues at the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, with whom we continue to work tirelessly to explore ways and means to support dialogue and mediation efforts for a resolution of the crisis in the country. I can emphasize that since the holding of the special meeting here in New York on 27 September, the Special Representative is now participating actively in all of the panel's meetings and its consultations with the Government delegation.

Allow me to say that all that those of us on the ground simply hope that some means can be put at our disposal and that we can make a difference after all that has happened in the past several decades. The Central African people have suffered enough from the crisis. With the Council's support, we want to make a decisive contribution so that peace can return to a country that all of us hold so dear.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Nébié for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Vervaeke.

Mr. Verbaeke: I am honoured by this opportunity to brief the Security Council, as well as for the opportunity for the European Union (EU) to address the Council today, have an exchange with Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, and Ambassador Nebié. This is the second time since the holding of the high-level event on the Central African Republic on the margins of the General Assembly that we discuss the Central African Republic. It is crucial to continue sending out clear signs of interest in the situation in that country.

We have to acknowledge that presently the country represents a combination of fragility and instability, together with a severe and still protracted humanitarian crisis. That is why we collectively need to engage and help the country to end violence and achieve lasting stability. That should also lead to accountability on the part of local actors. It is crucial that all actors remain fully focused on peace and reconciliation. The solution to the crisis is political, not military.

For its part, as expressed just last week by the European Union Foreign Ministers in Brussels, the European Union is committed to maintaining its substantial engagement and support for the Central African Republic. Our road map is clear: the consolidation of democratic institutions, the stability of institutions and security sector reform must go hand in hand. We have identified the following objectives in that process: first, the fight against impunity, including through the establishment of transitional justice; secondly, the restoration of the rule of law and of social cohesion; and, thirdly, the provision of basic services and the restarting of the economy, including through legal and sustainable use of natural resources. We welcome the efforts and progress made by President Touadera and his Government in those areas. We encourage them to continue in that direction with greater determination.

We are entering a critical phase in the Central African Republic that will require the mobilization of all international actors to coordinate our efforts in full transparency. The European Union recently held consultations with several partners, including France, Russia and the United States, in order to achieve better coordination in the field.

First and foremost, on peace and reconciliation, I would like to reiterate the European Union's full support for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation under the auspices of the African Union and the leadership of President Touadera. The work done by the panel of facilitators under the leadership of Ambassador Nébié lays the ground for a settlement. We call on all actors, international and regional, to support the action of the Government and of the African Initiative in a properly coordinated and fully transparent manner.

We now need to progress quickly and obtain results. In that regard, the intention of President Touadera to launch negotiations with the armed groups is positive. The process must remain a home-grown one. We stand ready to support all efforts in that direction. The decision to appoint a joint United Nations-African Union envoy is a good sign of increased engagement. They will complement the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), specifically the efforts of the Special Representative and the MINUSCA team in the country. I would like to take this opportunity to commend their efforts under very difficult circumstances and to pay tribute to all MINUSCA personnel.

The renewal of MINUSCA's mandate will soon be discussed. Its multidimensional role will remain essential to contribute to further stabilization in the Central African Republic. It will be crucial that the Mission remain able to strengthen and expand the authority of the State throughout the territory of the Central African Republic. That will not be achieved without a further build-up and deployment of security forces into the regions. MINUSCA must be able to provide operational and logistical support to the deployed Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), as recommended by the Secretary-General.

In that vein, the European Union will continue its substantial engagement in the area of security. The mandate of the European Union Training Mission has been extended until September 2020. A third FACA battalion was successfully trained. A fourth battalion is currently being trained. Additionally, most of the needed laws, decrees and doctrines have been developed with the support of the European Union Training Mission strategic advice. About a third of the FACA leadership has gone through the Training Mission's programme. That is a testimony to the Training Mission's leading role in building the capacity of the FACA and in defence sector reform in general.

European Union Mission activities also aim at facilitating the redeployment of FACA and the implementation of the national defence plan in Bouar. That is one of our priorities. In that regard, I would also like to stress the need for the mission to be able to work together with FACA and access all training premises in order to fulfil its mandate. That support to FACA in the military domain is complemented by EU support to the civilian security forces. We are using various EU instruments to advise the Ministry of the Interior, the police and the gendarmerie. That is without prejudice to possible increased support in future in support of capacity development and the deployment of internal security forces.

The European Union will also continue assisting the Central African Republic by strengthening the resilience of the population and of the State, while fully applying the approach linking relief, rehabilitation and development and the humanitarian-development nexus. The overall European Union development assistance for the Central African Republic for the period 2017-2020 amounts to close to €500 million.

I hope I have given you, Mr. President, a fair account of our commitment to continue supporting the Central African Republic as an illustration of strong trilateral coordination and cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union. I know the European leadership will remain engaged in the coming months, and I urge all partners to join our collective efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Vervaeke for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Adom.

Mr. Adom: I have the honour to make this statement in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic. In my presentation I intend to provide an overview of the Committee's work since my predecessor last briefed the Council (see S/PV.8187) on 22 February 2018, and, in doing so, highlight the activities of the Committee and the Panel of Experts, particularly my recent visit to the Central African Republic.

The security situation in the Central African Republic has remained volatile throughout the country

over the course of 2018, with marked deterioration in the humanitarian situation and continued attacks on civilians and humanitarian personnel by predatory armed groups. Despite that downturn, the Government of the Central African Republic has made tangible progress in terms of security sector reform, with the valuable assistance of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the European Union Training Mission, the Russian Federation, the United States and France, as well as bilateral, regional and international partners. We can now see that progress on the ground as the Central African Republic armed forces and internal security forces are gradually deploying across the country, together with MINUSCA personnel.

Since my predecessor's previous briefing to the Council, the Committee has held a total of six meetings: on 23 February, 16 March, 25 May, 22 June, 20 July and 7 September. The press releases summarizing those meetings are available on the Committee's web page. Nonetheless, I would like to highlight several of the Committee's activities, which are focused on the monitoring of the sanctions measures.

The Committee has advanced its close cooperation with the Central African Republic authorities and regional and neighbouring States in order to strengthen the implementation of the sanctions measures and to improve regional cooperation in that regard. On 7 September, the Committee convened a briefing for all Member States, including the Central African Republic and its neighbouring and regional States, to discuss the midterm report of the Panel of Experts and the recommendations contained therein (see S/2018/729). The deliberations proved to be of great value and provided an opportunity to exchange ideas on how to enhance regional cooperation in countering arms embargo violations and addressing cross-border arms trafficking and the exploitation of natural resources by armed groups. The root causes of the conflict in the Central African Republic cannot be addressed without the close involvement of the region and neighbouring States. I see the sanctions regime as a valuable vehicle to help bring the countries of the region closer together to address the management of small arms and light weapons.

Following a recommendation of the Panel's midterm report, the Committee has encouraged the authorities of the Central African Republic and neighbouring States to establish, activate or reactivate commissions to address transborder issues, including matters that are relevant to the United Nations sanctions regime or that affect insecurity in the Central African Republic, such as the implementation of the travel ban on sanctioned individuals, transhumance or trafficking in arms and natural resources.

In addition, I would like to commend the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), which provided training to the Forces armées centrafricaines and internal security forces on the safe and effective management of weapons and ammunition in the country. UNMAS will continue to improve weapons and ammunitions storage facilities and construct permanent armouries outside Bangui, such as in Bouar, in the months to come. Together with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, on 22 June UNMAS briefed the Committee on its assistance to the authorities of the Central African Republic, which, unfortunately, has been placed at risk due to a scarcity of funding. In that regard, I would like to call on Member States to provide additional funding to UNMAS and earmark it for weapons and ammunitions projects in the Central African Republic. It is important that the international community continue to assist the authorities of the Central African Republic in ensuring the effective management of weapons and ammunitions, which is a prerequisite in countering the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Central African Republic and the wider region.

Concerning the travel ban, the Committee and the Panel of Experts have actively engaged with relevant actors and Member States and provided information on the appropriate travel ban exemption procedure to advance mediation activities, pursuant to resolution 2399 (2018) and Committee guidelines. In that regard, once again I would like to encourage the authorities of the Central African Republic and relevant Member States to use that tool to fully comply with the sanctions regime. It is unfortunate that no Member State, since the establishment of the sanctions regime in 2013, has requested an exemption to the travel ban, although the Committee is well aware that sanctioned individuals are travelling.

With regard to the assets freeze, in its midterm report the Panel of Experts reiterated that the authorities of the Central African Republic had yet to freeze the accounts and assets and halt the payment of salaries to sanctioned individuals Alfred Yékatom, Eugène Ngaïkosset and Habib Soussou. I stressed the same

during my recent visit to the Central African Republic and hope that appropriate measures will be taken as soon as possible.

Along those lines, I would like to express my sincere words of gratitude to the authorities of the Central African Republic for their hospitality and engagement during my visit to Bangui and Kaga Bandoro from 2 to 5 October, together with Committee representatives of France, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, the United States, the Embassy representatives of China and the Russian Federation in Bangui, and several members of the Panel of Experts. I would also like to convey my words of gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and his colleagues at the Mission for their outstanding support to my delegation.

My visit to the Central African Republic was the third by the Chair since the establishment of the Committee in 2013, but the first since May 2016. During the visit, the authorities of the Central African Republic unanimously called for the lifting of the arms embargo as it relates to the Government so that the armed forces can deploy throughout the national territory and protect the population from the predations of armed groups. They also expressed the view that the embargo is affecting only the Government and not preventing the armed groups from receiving weapons and ammunition via the country's porous borders.

For my part, I underlined that it is the prerogative of the Security Council, and not the Sanctions Committee, to ease, strengthen or lift the arms embargo. I also echoed the conclusions of the Secretary-General's letter of 31 July to the President of the Security Council on benchmarks to assess the arms embargo — namely, that the "embargo has not prevented the Government from receiving weapons through the prevailing exemption provisions" (*S/2018/752, p.7*). As the Secretary-General noted in his letter, it would be important to assess the embargo according to the three key benchmarks: first, progress on security sector reform, including the armed forces and the internal security forces and their needs; secondly, progress on national weapons management and ammunition capacity; and, thirdly, progress on the effective monitoring and management of borders to address the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Adom for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting, which is being held at a particularly important time for the Central African Republic. I would also like to thank our briefers for their very enlightening statements.

The situation in the Central African Republic remains especially fragile because of the violence perpetrated by armed groups against civilians, in particular women and children, humanitarian and medical personnel and the Blue Helmets. Abuses committed against internally displaced persons in Bria in September, during clashes between ex-Séléka and anti-balaka factions, are tragic and unacceptable. In that challenging environment, we reiterate our full support for President Touadera's efforts to promote national reconciliation and re-establish State authority. We encourage him to continue working for justice, disarmament and the country's economic recovery.

We also believe that the message to armed groups must be clear. They must lay down their weapons, commit themselves immediately and unconditionally to the peace process and understand that the violence they perpetrate will not go unpunished. In that regard, France welcomes yesterday's inaugural session of the Special Criminal Court, which marked the official launch of investigations into gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in the country. It is an important step in the crucial fight against impunity.

The current situation, as worrisome as it is, must not overshadow the genuine progress that has been made since last year. It shows that a solution to the crisis is possible.

We therefore welcome the holding of the high-level meeting on the Central African Republic on the margins of the General Assembly, which reaffirmed the international community's support for the Central African Republic and emphasized that the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is the only framework for the peace process in the country. That is an essential point. In that context, while the list of the claims of the armed

groups was finalized and sent to the Central African authorities at the meeting in August organized in Bouar by the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative, the priority now must be to move forward, without delay, towards a direct dialogue between the Central African Government and the armed groups in order to reach a comprehensive political agreement that leaves no issue aside, particularly that of the fight against impunity. In that regard, I would like to highlight three elements that we consider crucial to the success of the African Initiative.

First, we believe it is essential to avoid parallel initiatives, which lead to confusion, and to ensure that all partners of the Central African Republic are well-coordinated. That is a prerequisite for the success of the African Initiative. It is also crucial that the African Union and all of the States in the region continue their commitment, at the highest level, in order to ensure the success of the next steps in the implementation of the road map adopted in Libreville. In that regard, we welcome the recent decision of the United Nations and the African Union to appoint a joint special envoy to support the African Initiative, and who, of course, will have the full support of France. Finally, we believe it is important that the direct dialogue between the Central African Government and the armed groups involve other segments of Central African society, in particular women, whose participation in the peace process is essential.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming France's full support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic. As a mission that operates in a difficult environment, MINUSCA plays an indispensable role, whether in protecting civilians, supporting the peace process, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance or supporting the recovery of the Central African Republic. As such, MINUSCA requires the full support of everyone. In that regard, I would like to pay tribute to the peacekeepers who pay a heavy price for their service in the Central African Republic. I would also like to commend all the efforts undertaken by MINUSCA to increase its mobility, reduce its footprint, improve its operational performance and continue the work that has already begun with the troop-contributing countries to prevent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure that they do not go unpunished. Those welcome efforts must clearly continue.

In that context, as the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate approaches, France fully supports the Secretary-General's recommendations, in particular that of maintaining MINUSCA's robust format and mandate. We also feel it is crucial that MINUSCA be able to strengthen its role in supporting the political process. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the United Nations and the African Union to integrate MINUSCA into the African Initiative and to integrate the Special Representative into the panel of facilitators. France strongly urges the Security Council to authorize UNMISCA to provide limited logistical support for the gradual and controlled redeployment of the Forces armées centrafricaines trained or certified by the European Union Military Training Mission (EUTM) in the Central African Republic. That support, alongside internal security forces, is essential to enable the restoration of Government authority in all its administrative, security and judicial components — that is our collective priority. It is a high expectation of the Central African authorities and the Central African population itself. I would like, once again, to commend the excellent work of the EUTM in supporting the reform of the security sector in the Central African Republic.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance for the Council and the entire international community to remain mobilized and united in support of MINUSCA and in favour of lasting peace in the Central African Republic. That is one of the conditions for success in supporting the Central African Republic and all Central Africans, and it is in that spirit that France will present, in the coming days, a draft resolution for the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to take the floor in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. My delegation also thanks Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, for his briefing on the situation in the Central African Republic. We also thank Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic and Head of the African Union Mission for the Central African

Republic and Central Africa, and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, for the quality of their statements.

My delegation welcomes the progress made by the Central African authorities in the process of emerging from the crisis, in particular in their implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration pilot project; community violence reduction programmes; security sector reform and the deployment of defence and security forces; and the restoration of Government authority, justice and reconciliation.

Despite the progress made, there are still many political, security and humanitarian challenges to overcome. At the political level, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the Central African authorities' stated willingness to prioritize dialogue with all national and regional actors. That willingness to engage in dialogue, particularly with armed groups and all civil society actors, which is perfectly in line with the African Union's African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, leads us to believe in a peaceful and sustainable way to end the crisis in the Central African Republic. Côte d'Ivoire therefore expresses its support for the African Initiative and welcomes, in that regard, the decision of the United Nations and the African Union to jointly appoint a special envoy to foster efforts to effectively implement the Initiative.

The recurrence of attacks against civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, as well as the looting and burning of many villages by armed groups, particularly in the central and south-eastern parts of the country, are areas of concern to which prompt responses must be provided. We must also condemn the violence perpetrated by those groups, which has resulted in the deaths of several displaced persons and three Russian journalists. My country encourages the Central African authorities to continue efforts to restore Government authority throughout the national territory, which to date has enabled districts such as Bangassou, Bouar and Paoua to regain relative security. The process of restoring Government authority must be carried out based on the joint deployment operation of the Forces armées centrafricaines and United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) forces. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the efforts made by the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, whose renewed mandate will make it possible to train and expand the defence and security forces of the Central African Republic.

On the humanitarian front, the situation on the ground is marked by the looting and burning of villages by armed groups in areas under their control. Those acts of violence are causing massive population displacement and worsening the humanitarian situation; there are more than 600,000 displaced people and 572,000 refugees. Similarly, frequent attacks on humanitarian convoys by armed groups constitute major obstacles to the delivery of aid to the population and make the situation on the ground particularly difficult and complex. My delegation pays tribute to the memory of all the humanitarian workers who have lost their lives during their noble mission in the Central African Republic and wish the wounded a speedy recovery.

We urge MINUSCA to strengthen protection for civilians and for humanitarian workers in carrying out their tasks in the Central African Republic. In that regard, my delegation commends the excellent work done on a daily basis by Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga and his colleagues. We also call on the international community and bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as donors, to increase their support for the work of humanitarian agencies in the country. Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its support for MINUSCA and endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General aimed at strengthening its presence and tasks in view of the renewal of the Mission's mandate.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire urges the United Nations, the countries of the region and neighbouring States in particular, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to maintain their level of commitment to the success of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's thanks to Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director of the European External Action Service for Africa, as well as Ambassador Kacou

Houadja Léon Adom, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic, for their comprehensive briefings on the current situation in the Central African Republic.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea remains concerned about the sporadic resurgence of violence and the virulence with which the ex-Séléka and anti-balaka armed groups have taken control of part of the country and are attacking civilian and military targets. We strongly condemn the incidents that took place on 4 October in the town of Sosso-Nakombo, in the south-west of the country, where three Chinese citizens were killed by residents of the area and another three were injured. We equally condemn the attacks against civilians in the town of Bria and on the Bria-Irabanda route, in the south of the country, where at least 30 people died and four were injured. We recall that such attacks are unacceptable and can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its deepest condolences to the Governments of the People's Republic of China and the Central African Republic for those irreparable losses in human life, while expressing our solidarity with the families of the victims of the attacks. We wish those who have been injured a swift recovery.

As we commend the excellent work being carried out by MINUSCA in the Central African Republic, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea encourages it to persist and to spare no effort to support the Central African authorities in order to ensure that the perpetrators of such criminal acts are prosecuted and brought to justice. We call on the ex-Séléka coalition and the anti-balaka groups operating in those regions to put an immediate end to all attacks against the civilian population and to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. We stress that only a comprehensive and inclusive political solution that supports the development of effective and inclusive public institutions and guarantees accountability for such acts will help to put an end to the attacks against the rule of law and civilians.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is optimistic about the high-level meeting held on the sidelines of the current session of the General Assembly, co-chaired by the President of the Central African Republic, His Excellency Mr. Faustin Touadera; Secretary-General António Guterres; Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Mr. Ahmad Allam-Mi, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States. The meeting undoubtedly made it possible to reaffirm the importance of an inclusive political process in the Central African Republic, as well as reforms in the security sector, through the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. Moreover, political efforts and dialogue are the only alternatives likely to bring about long-awaited peace dividends and national and regional stability. They are also the most likely means to incite armed groups to sign a peace agreement with the Government, hand over their weapons and engage in the country's development efforts.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea firmly believes in supporting the African Initiative in strengthening the general framework for dialogue between the armed groups and the Central African Government. We recognize and appreciate the efforts of MINUSCA in playing a more important role in the Initiative process. In that context, it is necessary to welcome the continued progress made by MINUSCA in the implementation of its political strategy in support of Government reform efforts and the national peace process through agreements at the national level, adapted to specific local contexts and prevailing armed groups. Those efforts have had a significant impact on the decrease in attacks against civilians in recent months. In Bangui, for example, intercommunal dialogue in the third district facilitated the gradual return of displaced persons following Operation Sukula. Local peace and reconciliation processes in Markounda and Zemio helped to reduce violence and increase the freedom of movement, as well as facilitating the return of State authorities.

Our delegation also welcomes the valuable contribution of the Sudan and the Russian Federation to efforts aimed at achieving peace by organizing and supporting a meeting with the three main ex-Séléka factions and an anti-balaka faction in Khartoum on 28 August. In their statements, the armed factions committed themselves to support peace and dialogue within the framework of the African Initiative.

We also want to highlight the role of the Central African Government in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, which is supported by MINUSCA and was successfully launched in the western part of the country with seven armed groups. As we speak, the Government continues to work with other armed groups

to reach new agreements and extend disarmament and demobilization to other parts of the country. It should be emphasized that the programme constitutes a precondition for the establishment and strengthening of State authority, and therefore for the full training and rearmament of the Forces armées centrafricaines.

Despite all those efforts in the reconciliation process of this brotherly country and the achievements made, the Central African Republic remains an extremely fragile State, threatened by a risk of reversion. The Central African Republic is on the verge of a humanitarian crisis in the absence of opportunities for development and recovery due to continuing insecurity and a lack of purchasing power for its better development. In that regard, we reaffirm the notion that the multifaceted problems faced by the Central African Republic cannot be solved by focusing on security-based solutions alone. The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea believes in a comprehensive and sustainable solution to respond to instability in Central Africa. The absence of peace and stability in the country requires us to go beyond simply containing violence. We must build a resilient society and institutions that guarantee human security in Central Africa.

On the other hand, we remain concerned about widespread rape and sexual assaults on women committed by ex-Séléka and anti-balaka armed groups and the Lord's Resistance Army, who maintain a strong presence in various areas. The vast majority of identified cases of sexual violence of an ethnic and sectarian nature impede the mobility necessary for women in the Central African Republic to carry out vital economic and livelihood activities, such as gaining access to crop fields, markets and adequate education. Consequently, we urge Government and non-State actors to agree on and implement a structured commitment within a set time frame to prevent and respond to those violations, including the development of a comprehensive national strategy on sexual and gender-based violence. In accordance with the Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the alleged victims must be assisted by the United Nations system through medical and psychosocial support.

Looking to the future, we must continue to strive to transform the political and security context and support national efforts to bring the country from war to peace. The need for all countries in the subregion to continue to participate constructively and for all mediation efforts to be closely coordinated within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic to strengthen the peace process is also of fundamental importance. Likewise, we must achieve an inclusive and transparent electoral process that will lead to the presidential and legislative elections of 2020 and 2021, respectively, as an integral part of the political process.

We align ourselves with the press release on 19 September by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which underscores the need for political actors in the Central African Republic to fully and in good faith take ownership of the peace and reconciliation process in their country, in the knowledge that the countries of the region and partners cannot substitute the Central Africans themselves in seeking a sustainable solution. In that regard, the words of Mr. Nébié concerning the meeting held by Mr. Mahamat with former Presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia fill us with optimism and hope, the result of which we hope will lead the way to reconciliation and peace in Central Africa.

I would like to reiterate our congratulations to the Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga for his considerable efforts and leadership in successfully completing the process of peace and political development, in spite of the extremely difficult context, as well as to His Excellency President Touadera and the Central African Republic Government for the efforts being made in favour of peace and reconciliation. I would also like to express the support of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his latest report of 15 October (S/2018/922) on the extension of MINUSCA's mandate for one more year until 15 November 2019, which is why we have already expressed the Republic of Equatorial Guinea's support for the draft resolution that is soon to be presented by France in that regard. Finally, we suggest that the Council visit this suffering brotherly country in the course of this year to bring a message of encouragement, support and solidarity to its Government and the population, just as the Holy Father, Pope Francis, did a few years ago.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China listened attentively to today's briefings.

Under the leadership of President Touadera, the political process in the Central African Republic has recently made positive progress, but the security

situation in the country remains fragile. There are still violent clashes between armed groups and the realization of lasting peace and stability in the Central African Republic continues to face challenges. China welcomes the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic to strengthen the deployment of national security forces, advance security sector reform and enhance capacity-building. We call on parties in the Central African Republic to proceed based on the interests of the country and its people to concretely advance disarmament and the peace and reconciliation process and resolve differences through dialogue and consultation.

China appreciates the important role of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in maintaining stability in the Central African Republic and supports the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and the whole of MINUSCA in actively fulfilling their mandates and carrying out their activities. China also supports MINUSCA in enhancing its self-defence, security and early-warning capabilities. The Secretariat should fully heed the legitimate concerns of the troop- and police-contributing countries and take concrete and effective measures to ensure the safety of the peacekeepers in order to improve the effectiveness of MINUSCA.

China notes the Secretary-General's assessment of the work of MINUSCA and the relevant recommendation of adjustment in his latest report (S/2018/922). We will actively participate in the consultations on relevant draft resolutions of the Security Council and will play a constructive role. Regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, as well as the countries of the region, all play an important role in advancing the peace process in the Central African Republic. The United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, should strengthen their coordination with the Government of the Central African Republic to promote peace, reconciliation and dialogue and jointly help the Central African Republic to realize peace and development at an early date. China calls on the international community to continue to provide support to the Government of the Central African Government in its efforts to enhance national capacity-building and provide necessary assistance to the Government in its efforts to maintain social security and stability, deal with the humanitarian crisis and resolve the root causes of the conflict.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and the briefings of Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Mr. Koen Vervaeke and Ambassador Kacou Houadja Léon Adom.

Peru notes with deep concern the persistence of the crisis in the Central African Republic, despite the efforts made by the international community and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The progress made in the political sphere has not yet been reflected in security improvements or alleviating the serious humanitarian situation. Most of the country is living in a state of conflict due to, among other factors, the precarious situation of the State, the illegal exploitation of natural resources by armed groups, the illicit trafficking of weapons and the incitement to violence, including inter-ethnic violence.

We regret that that violence is affecting the civilian population, humanitarian personnel and MINUSCA, and that the number of internally displaced persons and refugees continues to increase, in a country where more than half of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. Given that situation, we deem it necessary for the Security Council to continue supporting the authorities of the Central African Republic in their efforts to assert State authority and achieve peace and national reconciliation. At the same time, we believe that the mandate of MINUSCA, which is about to be renewed, should prioritize the following three points.

First, it should provide support for the political process. The Mission should help implement the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and support the authorities in organizing and conducting the 2020 and 2021 elections. We emphasize the importance of linking the African Initiative with the peace agreements reached in places such as Bangassou, Bangui and Bouar, as well as promoting greater citizen participation in the political life of the country, especially women and young people.

Secondly, it should support the security strategy. Political progress depends to a large extent on the ability of the armed forces and police to protect the civilian population. We consider it of the utmost importance to reinforce the support that MINUSCA

has been providing in that area, in cooperation with the European Union. We also consider it necessary for the political process to prioritize the full implementation of security sector reform and programmes on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and on reducing communal violence. In that regard, we also underscore the role of local, subregional and regional cooperation to effectively address the complex situation in the Central African Republic. In particular, the mixed commissions should serve to strengthen the border controls required to deal with illicit trafficking in persons, natural resources and arms.

Thirdly, I turn to institutional strengthening. Achieving sustainable peace requires national institutions and capacities equipped to prevent and resolve disputes peacefully, guarantee access to justice and accountability for crimes committed and, on that basis, promote national reconciliation. To that end, we stress the importance of MINUSCA's contribution to the establishment of the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission in the context of a national transitional justice strategy that, inter alia, will make it possible to assist the victims of sexual violence and the recruitment of children by armed groups. We recognize the efforts of the Central African authorities to establish and operationalize their national judicial institutions, especially the Special Criminal Court.

The solution to the crisis requires a long-term multidimensional approach to address the root causes of the conflict. In that regard, we highlight the Government's efforts embodied in the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. We also highlight the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the Peacebuilding Commission in conflict prevention and resolution and institutional development and strengthening.

I conclude by renewing our commitment to building sustainable peace in the Central African Republic and, as a troop-contributing country, our strong support for MINUSCA, and by stressing the importance of the renewal of its mandate for the Central African population and the stability of the subregion.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I too thank each of our three briefers today for their presentations and for the work that they have done in support of peace and security in the Central African Republic over the past year. We would also like to extend our thanks to Ambassador Adom for his exceptional leadership in bringing the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) to Bangui earlier this month for a trip that was enlightening and instructive for everyone. We particularly note his leadership in sharing Côte d'Ivoire's positive experience with a post-conflict arms embargo.

One year ago, the United States joined other Security Council members to support an increase in the troop ceiling of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) by 900 military personnel, thereby reaffirming the depth of our commitment to the peace and security of the Central African Republic. Despite notable delays in receiving those troops, MINUSCA continued to make progress on its mandated tasks, which resulted in significant gains in the security and stability of the Central African Republic. That became clear to us when a United States delegation visited Bangassou earlier this month — something that would have been impossible year ago. They heard first-hand accounts of the positive impact MINUSCA has had there. There is no doubt in our minds that MINUSCA is making a positive difference in the lives of Central Africans.

There has also been notable progress in restoring State authority and building the capacity of the Central African Government, including the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) and internal security forces. The fact that there are now four FACA battalions, and more to come, trained by the European Union (EU) and deployed around the country, proves that the Central African Republic is on a positive trajectory.

We further commend the progress of the Central African Government, assisted by MINUSCA and other international partners, in operationalizing the Special Criminal Court. The official opening of investigations by the Special Criminal Court this month marks an important step forward in the fight against impunity and ensuring justice for victims. There are still many chalienges to overcome. We are particularly concerned about the situation around Bria, with attacks on civilians in August and September and the kidnapping last week of United Nations police officers.

Our collective goal should be a political solution for durable peace and recovery. The United States believes that the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic represents the best path to achieving that goal and enabling the conditions for

the extension of State authority to promote development. However, in order for the African Initiative to be successful, every actor must commit to transparency and coordination. As I said at the high-level ministerial meeting on the Central African Republic peace process, the Central African people have seen previous dialogues that produced agreements, but not results. We must all work together in good faith to change that narrative and to support President Touadera and his Government as they strive for peace, justice, accountability and the prevention of future atrocities.

For our part, the United States will financially support the African Initiative. We are working in partnership with the EU, MINUSCA and Central African officials to ensure that peace talks address the underlying causes of armed conflict. We are also carefully considering the Secretary-General's recommendations for changes to MINUSCA's mandate and look forward to a conversation about the best means to achieve our common goals.

The people of the Central African Republic have already seen multiple peace agreements signed, followed by collapse. They have heard about programmes to demobilize, disarm and reintegrate former combatants, which enriched the few, but not the many. They have seen previous attempts at security sector reform fail and they continue to rely on humanitarian aid to survive. Whatever we agree in the next mandate renewal, it should be based on the lessons that we have learned from the past to help the Central African people seize a brighter future. We look forward to working with the Council and our United Nations counterparts in that effort.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I would like to extend our thanks to all of our briefers. I would like in particular to ask Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga and Special Representative Moussa Nébié to pass on to their teams on the ground the thanks of the Council for the work they do in difficult circumstances, and I echo my American colleague's thanks and tribute to the Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire for the very important work he has personally been spearheading on behalf of us all.

We share the Secretary General's assessment that the security situation in the Central African Republic remains extremely fragile — a message repeated in a letter sent to all of us today by 45 non-governmental organizations active in that country. As our briefers today have illustrated, there are some positive signals of progress in the Central African Republic, but the security, humanitarian and justice situations remain concerning. The international community must not relax its efforts towards building a secure, stable and peaceful Central African Republic.

Civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers continue to be attacked. More than one in four Central Africans remain displaced. Half of the population is in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. Only 36 per cent of the 2018 humanitarian response plan has been funded. We encourage all Member States to help fill that gap. The United Kingdom has provided £63 million, or $81 million, in humanitarian aid to the Central African Republic since 2015. We believe that this aid supports progress towards a stable, secure and peaceful Central African Republic — something that remains in all of our interests.

It is clear that in order to achieve peace in the Central African Republic, efforts to stabilize the country in the short-term must go hand in hand with longer-term progress on reconciliation, justice and peacebuilding. We therefore welcome the efforts of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which remains the only viable path to peace. I agree wholeheartedly with the French Ambassador on the need to avoid paraliel initiatives, which risk confusion, or worse. Coordinated and sustained international support is vital if the Central African Republic is to achieve long-lasting peace and stability. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation that there should be greater United Nations involvement in the Initiative to ensure link up between political peace and security efforts and to reinforce coordination between national and international partners on the Central African Republic's road to peace.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has an essential role to play in supporting the peace initiative, and the United Kingdom is committed to working with colleagues on the Security Council to ensure that MINUSCA can deliver that support as part of its stabilization mandate. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation for MINUSCA's renewed focus on the peace process, including through more direct engagement.

Also, in support of MINUSCA's mandate delivery, we commend the Secretary-General's plan to introduce a performance management mechanism to alleviate some of the pressures on the Mission. That will give it a greater ability to improve performance and to enforce the zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse and exploitation and sexual harassment. I note in that context Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga's comments about ensuring that troops that are deployed are properly trained and equipped. He is right in saying that it is a responsibility of the Council.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish and implement a comprehensive, strategic outreach and communication plan, making clear what MINUSCA is delivering for the people of the Central African Republic, building a better understanding of the peace process and making sure we take into account the views and needs of Central Africans. As we have all heard and seen many times in the Council, an inclusive peace process that ensures the participation of women is more likely to be sustainable and successful.

Among these concerns respecting the Central African Republic, we must remember that there can be no peace without justice. Incitement to violence, including on religious and ethnic grounds, and attacks on civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers will continue unchecked if perpetrators perceive impunity to be the standard. We recognize the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic, together with MINUSCA, to bring some of the perpetrators of serious crimes to account. In that regard, we hope that the positive news of the inaugural session of the Special Criminal Court yesterday will soon translate into concrete progress in the fight against impunity, especially now that the Court's investigations can officially commence.

We urge the Central African Republic to work with international partners to expedite progress on criminal and transitional justice and ensure that judicial mechanisms are in place to support due process on these and other cases. That remains an essential component to bringing stability to the Central African Republic. The international community and the Government of the Central African Republic have come a long way since elections in 2015. We must continue to unite in our focus on building peace and stability in the country and on creating the conditions for the long-term protection and prosperity that the people deserve.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga; the Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, Mr. Moussa Nébié; the Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, Mr. Vervaeke; and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, Ambassador Adom of Côte d'Ivoire, for their important updates and outstanding leadership. We also welcome to the Chamber Ambassador Kpongo, Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic.

My delegation has some observations to share on key salient points.

First, on the political front, we underline that the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic remains the principle framework for the peace process in that country. In that regard, we welcome the work of the Initiative's panel of facilitators to prepare the dialogue between the Government and armed groups. We express our hope that all stakeholders will cooperate in a constructive manner and are committed to pursuing dialogue and confidence-building measures.

It is also important that all peace initiatives within the framework of the African Initiative be harmonized to ensure the coherence of the peace process, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) should be an integral partner. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the United Nations and African Union leadership to nominate a prominent figure as a guarantor of the peace process who will coordinate the efforts of all involved partners, thereby facilitating enhanced regional engagement. The committed support of regional and international partners in that process is also crucial. In that connection, we appreciate the mediation efforts of the Sudan, with the support of the Russian Federation, and look forward to peace negotiations in Khartoum, hopefully in December. We believe that the Sudan should be an important part of the solution.

We also note the important role that MINUSCA plays in advancing the peace process through a wide range of activities, including by providing its good offices, formulating its security posture, offering its substantive expertise and facilitating the disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration process. It also plays a critical role in security sector reform and transitional justice. We therefore endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation to reinforce MINUSCA's priority mandated task to support the political process by increasing its substantive and mediation components to promote that initiative and to align its political and security strategies with the African Initiative.

We also reognize the need for the Government, the African Initiative and MINUSCA to undertake comprehensive strategic communications and outreach plans, aimed at informing the population about the peace process, understanding local perceptions and motivations, and explaining the Mission's mandate and actions.

We further acknowledge the committed efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic, under the leadership of President Touadera, to extend State authority throughout the country, including through the implementation of local peace and reconciliation initiatives. We call on the international community to extend greater support to the Central African Republic authorities in order to increase the State's security and institutional capacities, which take on greater importance in the light of upcoming elections in 2020 and 2021.

Secondly, on the security front, we strongly condemn the continued attacks by armed groups on civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. Intensified sectarian rhetoric and intercommunal disputes result in higher levels of violence, thereby undermining all efforts to achieve national reconciliation.

We underline that with MINUSCA, as the primary force providing security while at the same time being overstretched, national authorities bear the primary responsibility to protect civilians. To that end, the greater support of international partners to boost the capacity of the national security forces is needed, as is the development of a comprehensive strategy on the protection of civilians involving all relevant actors. We commend the invaluable contribution of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, with the operational support of MINUSCA, in training and deploying the Central African armed forces. We also draw attention to the need to ensure the security of peacekeepers.

On the humanitarian front, against a backdrop of underfunding and a reduced humanitarian presence, the increasing numbers of internally displaced people and refugees from the Central African Republic in neighbouring countries demand the international community's immediate attention and financial support.

Finally, we would like to stress that all international efforts to stabilize the Central African Republic must be complemented by a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of the crisis, including through increased investment in the economy, job creation and better living conditions for the Central Africans. We welcome the continued engagement of the European Union and the World Bank in their efforts to create a conducive economic environment. We also support the draft resolution on MINUSCA, to be submitted soon by France.

Lastly, it is just as crucial that MINUSCA and the United Nations country team, along with other partners, continue to support the Government in implementing the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan for the 2017-2021 period.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga; the Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, Mr. Moussa Nébié; and Mr. Koen Vervaeke for their briefings on the latest developments in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). We also appreciate Ambassador Léon Adom for his briefing on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic and the outcome of his recent visit to Central African Republic. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic, who is participating in this meeting.

The Central African Republic continues to face enormous challenges. The absence of State authority in most parts of the country and the activities of armed opposition groups and self-defence militias fighting for land and resources by illegal parallel administration and taxation structures are plunging the country into yet another cycle of violence and conflict. We recognize the efforts of President Touadera and his Government, including in the areas of security sector reform and the establishment of functioning State structures, with the support from MINUSCA. We appreciate the role of

the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, as well as several bilateral, regional and international partners in that regard.

However, we wish to emphasize the importance of creating strong national ownership and building the necessary momentum for genuine and inclusive dialogue, in the context of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, to address the most pressing challenges facing the country in stabilizing the security situation, expanding State authority and putting in place inclusive governance structures.

We are encouraged by the increasing support for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic led by the African Union (AU). We underscore the need for closer coordination and synergy among African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and all other actors involved in bringing peace and stability to the country. In this context, we welcome the holding of the high-level ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the General Assembly, which reaffirmed the support of the international community to the African Initiative.

We support the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in jointly appointing a special envoy, who will also be a guarantor of peace process on the ground and facilitate the effective implementation of the African Initiative, including by liaising with all partners of the Central African Republic and the region. That will, we hope, help to expedite the peace and reconciliation process in the Central African Republic. We also acknowledge the outcome of the recent consultations led by the President of the Republic of the Sudan, His Excellency President Omer Al-Bashir, and the declaration of commitment issued by the anti-Balaka militia, led by Maxime Mokom, and the ex-Séléka led by Noureddine Adam, towards peace in Central African Republic.

The role of MINUSCA remains indispensable, and we appreciate the Mission's efforts in fulfilling its mandated tasks under difficult circumstances. We strongly condemn the attacks against MINUSCA peacekeepers and other humanitarian actors operating on the ground. We pay tribute to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace.

We are confident that the Security Council will continue to strengthen MINUSCA so as to enable it respond to the evolving situation on the ground. Particularly, the quick-reaction battle groups, the reserve battalion, the special forces company, the quick-reaction force company and its enabling units must be strengthened. In this regard, we note the outcome of the strategic review and support the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the review. The Mission's support to the Government-led local peace and reconciliation initiatives remains vital, and we note its contribution to reducing violence, building trust between communities and facilitating the return of internally displaced persons.

We therefore support the renewal of the mandate of the Mission and we look forward to constructively engaging in the upcoming discussions in this regard.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): Let me first thank the speakers for the clarity of their statements. Their suggestions are valuable in view of the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/922). I should like to join in the congratulations offered by the Ambassador of France on yesterday's inaugural session of the Special Criminal Court. The Court is essential to the fight against impunity.

Today, I would like to address three points: first, the peace process; secondly, the protection of civilians; and thirdly, security sector reform.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands fully supports the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. As President Touadera said before the General Assembly (see A/73/PV.9), it remains the only framework for peace negotiations in the Central African Republic. In recent months, we have considered how the United Nations could strengthen its support for the African Initiative. The invitation to join the panel of facilitators extended to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, and the announcement of the appointment of a Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the African Union mark important milestones. That encouraging development can only strengthen the momentum of the peace negotiations. The various stakeholders must now step up their efforts.

We call on the armed groups to lay down their arms. We remind them that the Council can apply sanctions against those who undermine peace. With a view to establishing lasting peace, we call on the Government to ensure the substantial participation of women in the negotiations. The commitment of the countries of the region is indispensable. We welcome the Sudan's efforts for peace in the Central African Republic, which are an integral part of the African Initiative. We encourage MINUSCA to strengthen its coordinating role in support of the political process, in line with the report of the Secretary-General.

My second point concerns the protection of civilians. This is a key task of MINUSCA in support of the Central African authorities. That task remains a challenge and will be particularly difficult if we do not give the Mission the equipment and the means to increase its mobility. At the same time, the Council needs to learn from its experience, positive or negative, in the area of operations. We committed to doing so in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

My third point concerns security sector reform. The Kingdom of the Netherlands commends the work of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic and other partners that have contributed to the rehabilitation of the security forces. Sharing the same goal, all partners must cooperate in a coordinated and transparent way. We call on the authorities of the Central African Republic to contribute to that approach.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General's letter (S/2018/463) on the logistical support of MINUSCA to the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA). The first deployments of the FACA have yielded encouraging results. However, it lacks essential means, including basic equipment. MINUSCA has a vital role to play in preparing the FACA to resume the paramount task of protecting civilians. That support must be in accordance with the due diligence policy on human rights.

I will conclude by underlining that the moment is critical for the people of the Central African Republic. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated significantly. Half of the population has been displaced. Mistrust prevails, including towards the Mission. As the warring parties prepare to meet soon at the negotiating table, we remind them that they hold the key to a better future for the people of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, for his valuable briefing to the Council. I should also like to thank Mr. Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service; and the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), for their informative briefings.

In my statement, I shall address three issues related to our discussion today: the security situation, the humanitarian situation and the political situation.

First, as to the security situation, during our participation in the official visit to the Central African Republic, from 2 to 5 October, we observed a number of positive steps that had been taken at the security and political levels, despite the continued fragility of the security situation in the capital, Bangui, and in Kaga Bandoro, which was included in our visit. The security situation in general is unstable. Since the outbreak of violence in the Central African Republic in 2013 and 2014, the gravity of the situation has been exacerbated by acts of violence committed by armed groups and parties to the conflict and as a result of hate speech and incitement to religious and sectarian violence.

We would like to express our serious concern about the continued violations and attacks carried out by those extremist armed groups against United Nations personnel, members of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and humanitarian workers. We strongly condemn the attacks targeting Muslims and their religious symbols, setting fire to their homes and attacking places of worship, just as we condemn any attacks targeting people on the basis of their religion or place of worship, regardless of what party they belong to. We support the efforts by the Central African Republic authorities to halt such actions and to raise people's awareness in order to limit hate speech and consolidate the principle of peaceful coexistence among society's various sectors.

Strengthening justice in the Central African Republic will represent an important step forward for

the stability and security of the entire country. In that regard, we pay tribute to yesterday's inaugural formal session of the Special Criminal Court, which we hope will contribute to ending the culture of impunity and to bringing those who perpetrate crimes against civilians to justice. We also welcome the proposed appointment of a joint United Nations-African Union special envoy and the proposal to consolidate all African initiatives in support of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

Secondly, we regret that the humanitarian situation is still critical and that nearly half of the inhabitants of the Central African Republic require urgent humanitarian assistance. There are more than 616,000 internally displaced persons and 572,000 refugees living in neighbouring countries, making the Central African Republic one of the countries most in need of humanitarian assistance in the whole world. Even more worrying is the fact that many of those in need are women and children.

Thirdly, with regard to the political situation, the African Initiative, which enjoys a high level of acceptance among most of the political parties in the Central African Republic, is an essential pillar for a dialogue between the Government and the armed groups. We call on all the parties to participate in the dialogue process in order to resolve this prolonged conflict. In that regard, I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the European Union, through its Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, which handles the training of Central African armed forces. I would also like to salute the efforts deployed in the region with the aim of bringing the conflicting parties to the dialogue table within the African Initiative. They will help to achieve security if they can continue until the holding of presidential elections in 2020 and 2021, which we hope all segments of society will participate in, including young people and women.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore our support for extending MINUSCA's mandate for another year, until 15 November 2019. The Mission is an essential element in achieving the priorities of the Central African Republic — support for the political process, the protection of civilians, the creation of an environment that ensures access for humanitarian aid and support for the national armed forces. We also support the Secretary-General's recommendation to add two new tasks to the Mission's mandate — support for the electoral process and the provision of limited logistical support to the armed forces and internal security forces — as well as the recommendation on amending the Mission's role with regard to national resources. We sincerely appreciate the Special Representative's tireless efforts and pay tribute to all those working in MINUSCA.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to begin by thanking our briefers, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, and our colleague Ambassador Kacou Léon Adom for their insightful presentations.

Poland welcomes the fact that some positive progress has been made under the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, which remains the main framework for resolving the crisis in the Central African Republic. However, further efforts are needed to ensure that the achievements made so far are not lost. We call on all parties to the crisis to fully engage in dialogue and to fulfil their commitments.

While commending the support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the African Union, as well as the engagement of regional and subregional actors in the mediation and reconciliation efforts, Poland emphasizes that consistency is key. To bring about real change, the political process must involve all political, social and ethnic groups, as well as women, and must be conducted at both the national and local levels. To that end, it is essential to ensure transparency in all actions undertaken by external actors. The country's political, administrative and judicial structures must be rebuilt and the sense of impunity in society reduced. It is critical to create closer links between the peace process and justice, and in that context we emphasize the importance of the elections planned for 2020 and 2021, which should provide the necessary impetus for implementing the processes of decentralization, establishing transitional justice and extending State authority.

At the same time, the efforts to overcome the political impasse and ensure the delivery of urgent

humanitarian aid should be complemented by long-term development programmes that address the root causes of the conflict and that include all groups from every side of the conflict.

Poland welcomes the redeployment in several areas of the country of the armed forces trained by the European Union Training Mission with MINUSCA's operational support, which is essential in order to reinforce national ownership and responsibility for the country's security. Nevertheless, the issue of logistical support to the national security forces must be urgently addressed. Poland would like to point out that all international partners providing assistance on the ground should work in a coordinated and transparent manner, which is the only way to achieve a unified approach to operationalizing the Central African Republic forces and ensuring their compliance with the highest standards. Considering the fragile situation in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA's priorities and core tasks remain valid. We value its engagement in supporting the political process, protecting civilians and ensuring a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

In conclusion, while we appreciate the achievements made so far, there is still a long road ahead for the Central African Republic. In our view, the international community and the country's people must stay the course in order to preserve what has already been accomplished. Poland supports the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/922). We commend the important work being done by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the European Union mission and other international partners in the Central African Republic. I would also like to assure Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga and his team of our full support.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, and Ambassador Léon Adom of Côte d'Ivoire for their briefings.

We share the concern expressed in the Secretary-General's report on the Central African Republic (S/2018/922) about the continuing unstable situation in the country, especially on the security front. A significant part of its territory is still controlled by armed groups. Despite some positive improvements regarding the issue of expanding State authority, the local Government bodies cannot fully carry out their functions.

We would like to express our sincere condolences for the peacekeepers who lost their lives this year. The courage of the Blue Helmets in the Central African Republic cannot be overestimated. We want to express our support for the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and of Mr. Onanga-Anyanga personally. We realize that the Mission's task is not an easy one, considering the size of the country and the presence there of a large number of armed groups.

Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the International Support Group for the Central African Republic, intends to continue its full support to the process of national reconciliation that has begun there, acting in coordination with the authorities in Bangui, the African Union, the leadership of the Republic of the Sudan and the other stakeholders involved in the quest for ways to normalize the situation in the Central African Republic. We agree with the Secretary-General that the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is vital as a pathway to a political settlement. We support the comprehensive implementation of the road map for a Central African settlement adopted in Libreville on 17 July 2017 through the mediation of the African Union.

The progress made in implementing the African Initiative is a positive step, and we particularly welcome the talks held in the city of Bouar from 28 to 30 August by the Initiative's panel of facilitators with the representatives of 14 armed groups. We hope that the consolidated document that resulted will lead to an early start to a direct dialogue between the Government and the armed groups. We believe that the talks held on 28 August in Khartoum under the auspices of President Bashir of the Sudan between the leaders of the largest armed groups, including some formerly allied with the Séléka and anti-balaka, represent an important step within the framework of the general African effort to find ways to help the Central African Republic emerge from conflict.

The declaration signed at the conclusion of the meeting in Khartoum announced the creation of a united Central African opposition with the aim of achieving a lasting and sustainable peace in the Central African Republic, recording their commitment to the African Union Initiative, their willingness to start a peace process with the central Government and their obligation to respect human rights and ensure the free and safe movement of representatives of humanitarian and other non-governmental organizations throughout the country. We presume that such an association will enable them to reach concrete agreements with the Government of the Central African Republic.

As we have repeatedly emphasized, Russia supports harmonizing the various Central African Republic peace initiatives to help advance the negotiation process, which will help to prevent them from competing with one another, as the Secretary-General's report cautions against. Russia's assistance in organizing the contacts in Khartoum is in line with the efforts of the African community, which is making a decisive contribution to ending the stalemate in crisis situations on the African continent in accordance with the African Union's principle of African solutions to African problems. We consistently advocate for the backing of the international community and especially the Security Council for agreements that are being developed through the mediation of the African Union and other African bodies, and for providing them with political, moral and material support.

We note the steps that Bangui has taken in reforming the security sector with a view to regaining control over the entire country. Together with the support of the international community, they are designed to help normalize the situation in the Central African Republic and to implement the national defence plan approved by President Touadera with the aim of gradually transferring responsibility for the country's affairs to its lawful authorities. For our part, we affirm that Russia will continue to support the Central African Republic's authorities in reforming the national security sector, including in the area of strengthening the armed forces' combat capability and staff potential. Russian military specialists managed to achieve significant results in a short space of time in training more than 1,000 Central African troops. We also intend to continue to increase our assistance on the humanitarian front, particularly through the provision of medical services to the population. Our collaboration with the Central African Republic's legitimate authorities in rebuilding its national security forces is constructive and transparent, as testified to by the latest report of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic and by the results of recent thorough inspections by United Nations representatives of a first batch of military equipment donated by Russia to the Central African Republic's Ministry of Defence at the beginning of this year. Besides that, we hope that our military and technical assistance to Bangui will cease to provoke what might be termed jealousy among our Council colleagues. We believe that in the current circumstances on the ground in the Central African Republic, constructive collaboration on the part of all international stakeholders is urgently needed.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I would like to thank all today's briefers for their valuable input and perspectives, and for their efforts to build peace in the Central African Republic. I would especially like to thank our colleague Ambassador Adom for his leadership on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

We are encouraged by President Touadera's commitment to advancing the peace process, including at the recent high-level meeting during the general debate of the General Assembly. The country's national ownership and leadership are of course critical to progress. United, well-coordinated and transparent international support is now needed. We therefore fully support the African Union-led African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic as a framework for all international engagement. We also welcome the proposal to appoint a special envoy to lead the Initiative who would mobilize and coordinate regional and international engagement. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) should also have a strong role in supporting the process.

The African Initiative must become more inclusive in its approach, however. For instance, in its current composition there is no space for representatives of civil society. Women have key roles as mediators in local initiatives, and we believe there is potential for their increased participation in the African Initiative's panel of facilitators, as well as for women as parties to the dialogue. We encourage the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as a new member of the panel,

together with Special Representative Nébié and others, to work to improve the inclusion of civil society, as well as the participation of women.

Progress in advancing the peace process is also important for stable and credible elections in 2020 and 2021. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation to include limited logistical support to the electoral process in the MINUSCA mandate. It is needed to strengthen capacity and ensure that the constitutional timeline can be met.

The security situation remains volatile. We are concerned about the continued widespread violence by armed groups, as well as targeted attacks on civilians and aid workers. Sexual and gender-based violence is increasingly used as a weapon of war, and women have become an expendable currency in the political economy of that war. The Council sent a strong signal earlier this year by making sexual and gender-based crimes a stand-alone designation criterion for the sanctions regime. That must now be effectively and actively implemented.

Like others, we commend and pay tribute to MINUSCA for its impressive efforts in a very challenging and often dangerous environment. Given the dire security situation, MINUSCA must be able to effectively exercise its core mandate to protect civilians and to do it increasingly in partnership with the national defence and internal security forces. There are good examples of that. The robust operations in the north-western province of Ouham-Pendé have led to a drop in attacks on civilians and the return of internally displaced persons. They have been based on a proactive approach by MINUSCA and coordinated with the activities of the Central African armed forces.

We therefore support the recommendation that MINUSCA should provide limited logistical support to national defence and security forces, enabling it to increase its footprint outside Bangui. Central African security forces must be fully and sustainably operationalized. A formal monitoring process should be put in place to ensure that MINUSCA's support is in full compliance with the United Nations Due Diligence Policy on Human Rights. The European Union (EU) and its Training Mission has already made important contributions in that regard. Trilateral efforts among the United Nations, the EU and the African Union can play a significant role in restoring peace and security in the country.

We welcome the efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions and the Secretary-General's new policy. However, we note with concern that nine new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded against MINUSCA forces during the reporting period. We expect that those cases will now be swiftly followed up, in accordance with agreed procedures.

With regard to the upcoming mandate review, we welcome the initiative by the Central African Republic country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission to provide observations to the Security Council, which include the importance of strengthened international support to the Government in its implementation of reforms and the advancement of the political peace process, and should now be duly considered in our review process. Transitional justice will play a critical role in the peacebuilding efforts. The people of the Central African Republic have repeatedly demanded that past grievances be addressed. We therefore welcome the progress made in establishing the Special Criminal Court and encourage further steps to secure financial support and political commitment for its functioning.

The humanitarian challenge in the Central African Republic is immense. As we have heard, half of the population is in need of assistance and only about a third of the humanitarian appeal has been funded. Additional funding is therefore urgently needed. We also need initiatives to combine development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts for long-term sustainable peace.

In conclusion, we must remain mobilized and united in our efforts to support the Central African Republic. The situation remains fragile, and only by working together can we help the country achieve lasting peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

My delegation thanks all of today's briefers, especially Ambassador Adom, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic. According to the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2018/922), the situation in the Central African Republic remains unstable due to the ongoing violence and insecurity perpetrated by armed groups. That instability hampers the country's development, capacity-building and State presence, despite progress

in protecting civilians, fostering inter-institutional cooperation and training the Central African Armed Forces, among other achievements.

My delegation commends the work of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which fosters dialogue and addresses the root causes of instability and armed violence in the country. We call on all armed groups to join the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. We also highlight the need for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), together with the Government, to establish lasting strategic and operational partnerships with all relevant international and regional stakeholders. The new mandate must foster unity among international and regional partners on the importance of finding political solutions and inclusive national efforts, as well as strengthening the role of the International Support Group of the Central African Republic in bringing together all international actors in support of the peace process. The mandate must continue to underscore the importance of national ownership and take all population groups into account, including women and young people. It should also highlight the need for ongoing international support to the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the Government authorities in order to accelerate the Plan's implementation and the coordination of peace efforts, particularly with regard to the African Initiative, the need to implement a national security policy and national security-sector reform strategy and the importance of strengthening justice institutions to combat impunity.

We commend the Mission on its efforts to identify the regions in which additional capacity is required to protect civilians and support the Government, to be provided through peace and reconciliation initiatives that can serve as frameworks for reducing violence, building trust among communities and facilitating the return of displaced persons. We urge MINUSCA to continue its efforts to advocate for the participation of women in the African Initiative and its work on community violence-reduction programmes, which have been effective in implementing local peace agreements and encouraging the voluntary disarming of a large number of young people involved in militia and armed-group activities.

In conclusion, we commend the active and ongoing support of regional and subregional organizations and the participation of the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the African Initiative's panel of facilitators, whose political efforts to foster peace and cooperation are key to the reconciliation process. All efforts must be conducted with full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic. It is the people of the Central African Republic themselves who are primarily responsible for achieving peace and stability in their country.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Kpongo (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Since I am taking the floor for the first time during your presidency, Sir, on behalf of my delegation I would like to sincerely congratulate you on your thoughtful stewardship of the Council's work for the month of October.

As described in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/922), the situation in the Central African Republic remains a source of serious concern in the light of the clashes and attacks on civilians in the past few weeks. The briefings by Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, included information that makes us realize that there are still many obstacles on the road ahead, despite the commendable progress that has been made in the quest for ways and means to achieve peace. The violent atmosphere created by the clashes between armed groups vying for control of land and access to natural resources shows that much remains to be done. As the report suggests, the continuing climate of instability created by the armed groups means that the risk of a relapse into crisis is still serious. However, thanks to the efforts under way in many different areas, we can hope for a future free of this fear.

I strongly support all of the report's recommendations and observations as well as other proposals such as

those of the Peacebuilding Commission. We feel we can legitimately hope that if these recommendations are implemented in drafting the resolution renewing MINUSCA's mandate, we have a real chance to make progress towards a sustainable settlement of the crisis in the Central African Republic. The briefings by the two Special Representatives highlighted every aspect of the crisis. What is important is ensuring that we faithfully heed the proposed recommendations and comments with a view to giving MINUSCA a more robust new mandate.

The Secretary-General's report clearly shows that my country is still a long way from regaining peace and stability, despite enormous efforts on the part of the international community, including the Member States represented here and the United Nations itself, through MINUSCA. I want to note that the Government has worked closely in every way with its partners and with MINUSCA in implementing political and security strategies aimed at defusing the crisis, without success. The report highlights shortcomings on the part of the Government, MINUSCA and partners in the provision of resources for implementing the policies and strategies we have devised.

MINUSCA alone cannot provide sustainable protection for civilians across the entire country. Training and equipping our national defence and security forces should be a top priority for our partners, given that the national authorities' resources are practically non-existent. In that regard, I would like to quote the Secretary-General in paragraph 66 of his report:

> "The peace process in the Central African Republic is contingent on security conditions conducive for dialogue. The effective negotiation and implementation of any outcome will need to be backed by credible, adequate and sustained military pressure to prevent any further strengthening or expansion of the armed groups."

That recommendation, together with the commitment of our partners to respecting my country's priorities in terms of peacebuilding, and to providing adequate resources to the United Nations system so that it can deliver on its agenda, can create the conditions we need to restore the peace and stability in the Central African Republic that we so desire.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Security Council for their encouraging statements. We are particularly grateful to the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic for his leadership in managing the sanctions regime. My delegation looks forward eagerly to the important work of the French delegation in presenting us with a draft resolution adapted to the new tasks to be entrusted to MINUSCA and its Head of Mission.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite the members of the Council to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.